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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, B/MI

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DATE: 21 June 1950

FROM : Chief, Territorial Studies Section, B/MI

SUBJECT: Subdivision of project #791, International Frontiers of the U.S.S.R.

In the D/Ma Projects Committee meeting which considered and approved this project the question was raised as to whether the study should be taken up by regional sectors of the boundary instead of by country. Under this suggestion, the Soviet boundaries with European countries presumably would be lumped together as one sector, boundaries with Middle East countries from Turkey eastward to Afghanistan grouped in another sector, etc. I believe that the country break-down is better than the sector organization for the following reasons:

1. The study is intended primarily to be basic and factual although, when justified, certain estimates will be incorporated regarding boundary disputes. The sector break-down apparently necessitates certain assumptions regarding Soviet strategy and high politics which would change the whole slant of the report. It is not the intention, nor is it within the competence of this Section, to take up questions of Soviet designs in different areas or broad phases of strategy.

2. Soviet boundary problems per se involve relations between the Soviet Union and a specific bordering country, for the most part. The history, documentation, and mapping is different for the border of each country with the Soviet Union. This means that the problems in research and presentation are different for each country. It would be awkward, for example, to attempt to lump the Soviet boundaries of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan together in one chapter without a further break-down by country. There are some exceptions to the above statements, especially regarding points where the boundaries of three countries meet. The question of transportation in the Soviet-Norwegian boundary area, for instance, cannot be discussed without reference to the Finnish border. In cases such as this it is proposed that there be some duplicate discussion in the different country reports or that report B refer to material already presented in report A.

3. Valid conclusions regarding Soviet boundary policies seem, at this early stage in the investigations, to apply either to: (a) the boundary with a single country, or (b) the entire length of Soviet boundaries from Norway around to Alaska. The sector does not seem to be an area of relevance in this respect.

4. The country unit is a convenient and flexible one from the standpoint of priorities and presentation. Priorities have been assigned to different country sections of the report on the basis of apparent

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importance or urgency but not on the basis of geographical location alone. The country unit forms a sub-project of convenient size for one person to complete within a reasonable length of time. If several countries were grouped as a unit the length of time required for completion, hence the length of time anything could be published, would be correspondingly increased. After the country reports are completed they might be grouped together for publication if this seemed desirable, but the country unit organization should be preserved.

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